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J. R. Tanner

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OF THE REIGN OF JAMES I

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CONSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS OF
THE REIGN OF JAMES I

A.D. 1603-1625

with an historical commentary

BY

J. R. TANNER

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PREFACE

THIS collection of constitutional documents for the reign of James I has been prepared as a companion volume to the editor's *Tudor Constitutional Documents*, the first edition of which was published in 1922. The arrangement of the earlier work has been closely followed, and as far as possible the same principles have determined the selection of matter for inclusion. The historical commentary which deals with the more important constitutional problems of the reign has been taken mainly, although not exclusively, from the first three lectures of the writer's *English Constitutional Conflicts of the Seventeenth Century 1603-1689*, published in 1928, but sections have been added on the Secretary of State, the Privy Council, the Star Chamber, and the High Commission Court; and Finance has been treated rather more fully than in the work on the Tudors. As before, the texts selected have been chosen mainly for their accessibility to students in the University and College Libraries of Cambridge.

In collections of this kind there is a danger that too much may be omitted. Considerations of space sometimes lead an editor to present only the bare bones of documents, and to omit as mere verbiage all that clothes the skeleton and makes it live. But the phrases of old documents express the mentality of the age to which they belong, and even verbiage has its share in creating for the student the atmosphere of the period in which his work lies. In the present volume, therefore, the editor has endeavoured to limit his omissions to the following categories, although he has reluctantly to admit that this is of the nature of a counsel of perfection, and it has not been possible to apply the principles uniformly and in every case. (1) Whole passages have been omitted which refer only to matters of secondary constitutional importance. (2) In the discussion of legal questions, as for instance in the debate on impositions in 1610, where arguments are supported by an array of precedents and illustrations, it has been thought sufficient to make a selection from these instead of including them all. (3) In Acts of Parliament, where sentences which are common

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978-0-521-09122-0 - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I A.D. 1603-1625

J. R. Tanner

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

PREFACE

form recur with wearisome iteration, it has not been thought necessary to print them more than once. With these exceptions it is generally true to say that the documents are given in full.

Thanks are due to the following for permission to print copyright material: To the Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office for extracts from the *Calendar of State Papers* and from the *Acts of the Privy Council for the Reign of James I*. To the President and Council of the Royal Historical Society for Sir Julius Caesar's discourse on the Great Contract of 1610, printed in *Parliamentary Debates in 1610*, ed. S. R. Gardiner, Camden Society, 1861. To Mr Anthony Spedding and General E. W. Spedding for permission to quote freely from the late Mr James Spedding's edition of Bacon's *Works* and from his *Letters and Life of Bacon*. Finally, to Messrs Longmans, Green, & Co., the publishers of the *English Historical Review*, for permission to reprint Nicholas Faunt's 'Discourse touching the office of Principal Secretary of Estate, etc.'

The writer also desires to acknowledge the kindness of Professor F. G. Marcham of Cornell University in allowing him to include a missing passage in the Speaker's claim of privilege in 1604, and to thank Professor J. E. Neale for calling his attention to an extract from William Roper's *Life of Sir Thomas More* bearing on the earlier history of the Speaker's claim.

J. R. T.

18 July 1930

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	v
LIST OF DOCUMENTS	ix
LIST OF BOOKS	xiii
INTRODUCTORY	I
THE SUCCESSION QUESTION AND DIVINE RIGHT	4
THE UNION WITH SCOTLAND	23
RELIGION	46
§ 1 PURITANS AND ARMINIANS	46
§ 2 THE ROMAN CATHOLICS	82
THE SECRETARY OF STATE	110
THE PRIVY COUNCIL	128
THE STAR CHAMBER	140
THE HIGH COMMISSION COURT	146
THE CROWN AND THE JUDGES	173
PARLIAMENT	200
§ 1 PARLIAMENT AND ELECTIONS	201
§ 2 PARLIAMENT AND THE CANONS	230
§ 3 PARLIAMENT AND IMPOSITIONS	243
§ 4 THE PARLIAMENT OF 1614	265
§ 5 PARLIAMENT AND MONOPOLIES	268
§ 6 THE PRIVILEGE OF PARLIAMENT	272
(a) The Speaker's claim of Privilege	272
(b) The Privilege of Freedom of Speech	274
(c) The Privilege of Freedom from Arrest	302
(d) The Expulsion of Members	317
(e) The Punishment of Non-members	319
§ 7 PARLIAMENT AND IMPEACHMENT	321

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09122-0 - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I A.D. 1603-1625

J. R. Tanner

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FINANCE	336
§ 1 BATE'S CASE IN THE EXCHEQUER	337
§ 2 THE GREAT CONTRACT	345
§ 3 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE	354
§ 4 THE SUBSIDY ACT OF 1624, AND THE COUNCIL OF WAR .	374
APPENDIX	382
INDEX	384

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

(A) STATUTES

DATE		PAGE
1604	Succession Act (1 Jac. I, c. 1)	10
1604	Act for Commissioners of Union (1 & 2 Jac. I, c. 2)	31
1604	Act concerning Jesuits and Seminary Priests (1 & 2 Jac. I, c. 4)	83
1604	General Act in Shirley's case (1 & 2 Jac. I, c. 13)	317
1606	Acts against Popish Recusants (3 & 4 Jac. I, cc. 4, 5)	86, 94
1607	Act for the Removal of Hostility between England and Scotland (4 & 5 Jac. I, c. 1)	38
1610	Act for the better Execution of Justice (7 & 8 Jac. I, c. 1)	43
1610	The Oaths Act (7 & 8 Jac. I, c. 6)	105
1624	The Monopolies Act (21 & 22 Jac. I, c. 3)	269
1624	The Subsidy Act (21 & 22 Jac. I, c. 33)	374

(B) CASES

Impositions

Bate's case in the Exchequer (1606)	338
-------------------------------------	-----

The Crown and the Judges

Peacham's case (1615)	188
Case of <i>Commendams</i> (1616)	192

Privilege of Parliament: Control of elections

The Bucks Election case (1604)	202
--------------------------------	-----

Privilege of Parliament: Freedom from arrest

Shirley's case (1604)	303
-----------------------	-----

Privilege of Parliament: The right to expel a member

Sir Robert Floyd's case (1621)	318
--------------------------------	-----

Privilege of Parliament: The right to punish non-members

Edward Floyd's case (1621)	319
----------------------------	-----

Impeachment

Sir Giles Mompesson's case (1621)	322
Lord Chancellor Bacon's case (1621)	324
Case of Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex (1624)	334

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

(C) EXTRACTS

	PAGE
Francis Bacon, Viscount St Albans:	
speech to the Judges (1617)	198
on standing commissions (1620)	136
on the Star Chamber (1621)	141
<i>Essay Of Counsel</i> (1625)	133
Nicholas Bownd:	
on the Sabbatarian Controversy (1595)	52
Sir Julius Caesar:	
on the Great Contract (1610)	348
Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury:	
on the Secretary's office (c. 1605)	124
William Cecil, Lord Burghley:	
on the oath <i>ex officio</i> (1584)	168
Sir Edward Coke:	
on Prohibitions (1607)	186
on Proclamations (1610)	187
on Impositions (c. 1610?)	264
on the High Commission (1611)	156
his refusal to serve on the High Commission (1611)	162
Nicholas Faunt:	
on the office of Principal Secretary of Estate (c. 1592)	113
William Hudson:	
on the Star Chamber (c. 1633)	142
James I:	
on Monarchy (1598)	9
on the 'Undertakers' (1621)	266
Sir Thomas More:	
on the Speaker's petition (1523)	382
Sir Walter Raleigh:	
on Impositions (c. 1615)	264
John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury:	
his reply to Lord Burghley concerning the oath <i>ex officio</i> (1584)	169

(D) MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS

DATE	<i>The Succession Question and Divine Right</i>	
1610	The King's Speech to Parliament concerning Divine Right	14
1616	The King's Speech to the Judges on prerogative, &c.	17

DATE	LIST OF DOCUMENTS	PAGE
	<i>The Union with Scotland</i>	xi
1604	The King's Speech to Parliament on a Union with Scotland	24
1604	Proclamation of Union	32
1607	The King's Speech to Parliament on the Union with Scotland	35
	<i>Puritanism</i>	
1603	The Millenary Petition	56
1604	The Hampton Court Conference	60
1604	Articles concerning Ministers	69
1604	Proclamation enjoining Conformity	70
1604	Proceedings against clergy who refuse to conform	73
1610	Petition of the House of Commons concerning Religion	77
1618	James I's Declaration of Sports	54
1622	Directions to Preachers	80
	<i>The Secretary of State</i>	
c. 1613	The Secretary's Oath	127
	<i>The Privy Council</i>	
1603	A Venetian's description of the Council	131
c. 1613	The oath of a Privy Councillor	132
1614	The secrecy of Council proceedings	132
1614	The Council and the Justices of the Peace	138
	<i>The Star Chamber</i>	
1623	Proclamation concerning Printers	143
	<i>The High Commission Court</i>	
1584	Interrogatories under the oath <i>ex officio</i>	164
1606	Opinion of the Judges	147
1610	The Commons' Petition of Grievances	148
	<i>The Crown and the Judges</i>	
1605	<i>Articuli Cleri</i>	177
	<i>Parliament</i>	
1604	The Form of Apology and Satisfaction	217
1604	Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical	231
1604	The Speaker's Petition for Privilege	272
1610	Petition of Right against Impositions	245
1610	The Debate on Impositions	247
1614	The House of Commons on Impositions	267

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09122-0 - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I A.D. 1603-1625

J. R. Tanner

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

DATE		PAGE
1621	The Commons' Petition of 3 December (Freedom of Speech)	276
1621	The King's Letter to the Speaker of 3 December (Freedom of Speech)	279
1621	The Commons' Petition of 9 December (Freedom of Speech)	280
1621	The King's Answer of 11 December (Freedom of Speech)	283
1621	The King's Letter of 16 December to Sir George Calvert (Freedom of Speech)	287
1621	Protestation of the Commons (Freedom of Speech)	288
1622	Proclamation for the Dissolution of Parliament	289
1624	Address of both Houses, 8 March	296
1624	The King's Answer, 8 March	296
1624	Address of both Houses, 22 March	299
1624	Address of both Houses, 10 April	301
<i>Finance</i>		
1610	Memorial concerning the Great Contract	345
1610	The Lord Treasurer's Speech on Finance	357
1610	Debate on the Earl of Salisbury's appeal for Supplies	358
1612	Financial statement of 18 May	359
1612	Commission for a Feudal Aid	360
1614	Financial statement of 2 May	361
1614	The Archbishop's Letter concerning a Clerical Loan	362
1617	Financial statement by Bacon	363
1617	Correspondence concerning the reform of the Household	366
1622	Correspondence concerning a Benevolence	370
1624	Commission for the Council of War	380

LIST OF BOOKS

* * *The following are the full titles and editions of the works referred to in an abbreviated form in the footnotes and in the text.*

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Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09122-0 - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I A.D. 1603-1625

J. R. Tanner

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

LIST OF BOOKS

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Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-09122-0 - Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I A.D. 1603-1625

J. R. Tanner

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

LIST OF BOOKS

xv

- RALEIGH, SIR WALTER. Works. Edition of 1829.
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